Vol. V. Numb. 7.

THE OBSERVATOR.

A further Diſcourſe of the Neceſſity of preſerving the Health of our Sailors. *Of the* Portugueſe *Firing upon the* Engliſh Fleet. *Of the March of the Earl of* Gallway. *Of the Affairs of* Spain *and* Catalonia. *Of the* Confederate Fleet. *A Touch on the* Rehearſal.

From **Saturday** April the 6th, to **Wednesday** April the 10th, 1706.

Obſ. WE Entertain'd our ſelves, the laſt time we met, with a Diſcourſe of *Naval Affairs*, in regard to the Health and Lives of our *Sailors*. We can only Talk, and, as Children cry themſelves Aſleep, we may pleaſe our ſelves with our own Notions, and procure a ſort of Contentment in our own Breaſts, by thinking how things might be. If *Mars* will entertain *Eſculapius*, on Board Ship, only as a *Swabber*, or *Powder-Monkey*, he's a Fool for his Pains; Cutting and Curing makes the better ſport for the God of *War*, and the *Doctor* ſeems his beſt Friend in Patching up the Wounded, ſo that they ſhall be able to Fight again.

It may not be amiſs for you and I, *Country-man*, to inculcate our former Diſcourſe, if it be to no other purpoſe, than to let the *Sailors* know what a Kindneſs the *Obſervator* and his *Country-man* have for the Sons of the *Sea*; what Care they would have taken of the Health and the Lives of thoſe Men that run ſo many dangers, and have behaved themſelves ſo well in the Service of their Country.

Methinks it is ſo plain a thing, that Natural Conſcience ſhould reſtrain a Perſon from taking an Office upon himſelf which he does not underſtand, and on the Execution of which, the Lives of the moſt uſeful People in our Kingdom do depend. It is a Comfortable Importance to an Indigent Perſon to be a *Commiſſioner* of the *Victualling*. A broken *Barber* that can uſe a *Launcet*, and put a little *Burgundy-Pitch* to a *Tumour*, will Thank any Body that will make him a *Surgeon* of one of the *Queens Ships*. But how ill muſt any *Government* be ſerv'd by theſe Methods? Let the *Victualler* conſider how many Men may be Poiſon'd by his *Ignorance*, and that for thoſe Lives he muſt give an Account, where thoſe that Recommended him will have no Intereſt. 'Tis the ſame thing with the *Surgeon*; the Lives of our *Sailors* muſt be accounted for in another State; and 'tis pity it is not ſo here.

I heartily wiſh'd, when our *Repreſentatives* were forming *A Bill for the Encreaſe and Encouragement of* Seamen, *and for the Better and Speedier Manning the* Fleet, That Enquiry would have been made, How we came under theſe Circumſtances? How we loſt our *Sailors*? For the firſt Step to repair a Loſs, is to know how that Loſs happened, that, thereby, the Proviſions may fully anſwer the End, ſo as that no ſuch Accident ſhould again happen by the ſame means. 'Tis an eaſie matter to know how many *Sailors* have been Kill'd in this and the late *War*, how many have been En'tred on Board in *that* time, and how many Wanting at *this*.

I would not have you think, *Country-man*, that I mean all the Men that have not been Kill'd in the *Navy*, and yet have Died, have been deſtroyed by the *Victuallers* and *Emperic's*; no, the *Sailors* may Die by the Common Accidents of Death, as we Aſhore; but 'tis no Breach of *Charity* to believe moſt of 'em have gone that way; nor do I ſpeak at Random, or did I enter this Subject, but upon a fore-ſight of what, if not prevented, may put us to the ſame Neceſſity of Men the next Year.

I hope no Body will be Angry with me for looking a little forwards for the Good of my Country. 'Tis as good a Conſideration how to preſerve our Men, as 'tis how to get 'em; and want of this Conſideration has brought us into an Exigence that our Fore-fathers would have Bluſh'd to ha' known, and which we have overcome with the greateſt Difficulty.

Roger, I thank God, I have been the Inſtrument, under Providence, of ſaving the Lives of ſome Thouſands of *Sailors*, tho' it has Coſt me very dear: The Great Men in Offices thinking themſelves Abuſed by *Complaints* for the *Common Good*, which has ever been the Deſign of my Life, and the End of my Writing; and if I can, by theſe hints on this Subject, but ſave the Life of one poor *Sailor*, I ſhall think my Thought ſpent to a good purpoſe.

We ſhall have this Year, in our *Naval Expeditions*, many Men that never were Employ'd on the *Ocean*, and the greateſt care ought to be taken of them, till ſuch time as they are Seaſoned to the *Sea*. Theſe Men, by due care, may become Able Men againſt another Year, and fit for any Common Service in the *Navy*: But 'tis many Riſques and Hazards of Life they run; Firſt, by being Lodg'd on the *Ballaſt* in *Smacks*, when firſt Impreſs'd, where the Damps and Cold chills their Limbs, throws them into *Agues*, or intermitting *Feavers*, ſo that they are render'd Unſerviceable at firſt: This might eaſily be prevented, were no *Smacks* taken into the Service but what had a *Platform* Built over their *Ballaſt*, for the ſecurity of the Health of Men Impreſs'd for the Service. And Secondly, the unwonted way of Living, in reſpect of Air and Diet, muſt needs make a great Alteration on their Bodies, which ought to be Guarded by the Skill of Able *Phyſitians* and *Surgeons*.

The Story you told me, *Country-man*, of the *Potatoe Clerk* in the *Navy Office*, gives a bad Proſpect. That it ſhould be in the Power of a poor *Heel-maker* advanc'd to a *Clerk*, to trifle with the Lives of our *Sailors*, by putting by *Surgeons* that have the beſt Pretences. I could wiſh every *Surgeon* was Sworn, before he went to *Sea*, what Money,

Money he has Paid for his Admiſſion, it might be of more Service to the *Queen* and *Government* than ſome People do Imagine.

Country-m. Oh Maſter! The *Heel-making Clerk* ſtands on his *Pantofles* now. Ah Maſter! I find 'tis a good thing for a Man to have a Handſome Wife.

Obſ. Well, *Country-man*, let it be how it will, I hope better Care will be taken of the Health of our *Seamen*. Theſe Miſmanagements will, one time or other, come to the Knowledge o thoſe that preſide in our *Naval Affairs*, and then we may be certain of a Redreſs: We have done what we can do in the Caſe; and let us reſt Contented.

Country-m. Then, Maſter, let's call another Cauſe, 'tis too ſoon to go to Bed, and the Bottle of *October* isn't half out.

Obſ. Call what Cauſe you pleaſe, I am under your Direction in your own Houſe.

Country-m. Maſter, let's talk a little of the Publick News. An t we and the King of *Portugal* in *Alliance* together?

Obſ. Yes, Certainly.

Country-m. Why then did he Fire upon our Men of *War*?

Obſ. He did not; 'twas not by his Order; 'twas a Miſtake of the Governours of the Caſtle. An Embargo was laid that no Ships ſhould put to Sea, to prevent any Intelligence to be given of the Sailing of the *Confederate Fleet*. But when the King of *Portugal* heard of it he was very Angry, and let the Fleet Sail.

Country-m. Maſter, the *Poſt-Man* calls this an odd Miſtake, and I think 'tis the oddeſt that ever was heard of. No Ships Sail to give Intel igence, that's well enough: But that the Fleet ſhould not Sai to give Intelligence of themſelves that's bad enough. Maſter, is the Captain of that Caſtle Admiral of the *Confederate Fleet*, when they are in *Lisbon Harbour*? If we can't Sail from that Port without Leave, we may be broken in our Meaſures when they ſhall pleaſe not to give us Leave: But, Maſter, it plainly appears that we have loſt the *Galleons* by this odd Miſtake.

Obſ. May be not. But you ſee the King of *Portugal* is very Angry at it; and without doubt the Commander of the Fort has been very ſeverely Reprimanded.

Country-m. But, Maſter, what's that to the Loſs of the *Galleons*? Thoſe Fellows are gone to *New-Spain* to fetch Home a Power of Money to enable the *French* King to carry on the *War*; and had we taken theſe *Galleons* they could not ha' brought Home that Money, and the *French* King for want of it would have become a *Bankrupt*.

Obſ. Who knows but it may prove for the beſt, and our Ships may take them when they come Home Loaden with *Silver*?

Country-m. And who knows but when they are coming Home another odd Miſtake may happen, and our Ships may not be ſuffer'd to Sail? For my part, Maſter, had I been Admiral, and they had Fir'd at me, for the Honour of Old *England* I would ha' Fir'd at them. I would ha' beat their Forts and Caſtles about their Ears.

Obſ. Then thou would'ſt have Acted the part of a *Fool* and a *Madman*. I think Sir *John Leake* ſhow'd a great deal of *Conduct* in not doing ſo; 'twas better left to the Conſideration of Her Majeſty what to be done in that Affair. But 'tis very Neceſſary to take Care of an *Alliance* with a Prince who entruſts the Government of his Forts and Caſtles in the Hands of Men that have ſo very few Brains as to make ſuch odd Miſtakes, ſo prejudicial to the *Common Cauſe*.

Country-m. Well, Maſter, what you ſay may be Right. I am too hot to make an Admiral I ſhould uſe my Great *Guns* and *Bombs* as I do my *Towel*, on all occaſions, *And hey for the Honour of Old* England; I ſhould thump the Carcaſe of every Body that ſhould offer the leaſt Affront to the *Queen* of *England*. What do you think, Maſter, of the Poſture of Affairs Aſhore at *Portugal*? It ſeems the Marquiſs *Das Minas* is *Generaliſſimo* of the Forces; theſe odd Miſtakes bring odd Notions into my Noddle. Suppoſe he ſhould do as the Governours of the Forts did, and ſhould not let our Men go to Fight the *French* and *Spaniards*?

Obſ. There's no Danger of that. You ſee the *Poſt-Man* ſays, *That the Earl of* Gallaway *has the Direction of ALL.* Indeed, I have great hopes of Succeſs in that Quarter, ſince the Deſign of Beſieging *Badajox* is laid aſide, and our Advices aſſure us, That the Army is Marching into *Spain* by the way of *Alcantara*. The Troops of the Duke *D' Anjou* are Marching for *Catalonia*, that is, what he has in view, and he has taken ſo many of his beſt Forces from all Parts, that he ſeems not to have conſider'd what might happen in his Rear, or how the Kingdom of *Spain* may be Protected in his Abſence.

In a few Weeks time we may hear of a *Revolution* in *Spain*; for we muſt conclude that this March of the Earl of *Gallway's* is founded on the Aſſurances of ſome of the *Grandees* to joyn him, or the Weakneſs of *Anjou's* Forces in thoſe Parts, that where he is not able to perſwade the Natives to *Loyalty* to their Lawful Soveraign, he may force them to it by the Power of his Arms.

The Affairs of the Duke *D' Anjou* look with a much worſe Countenance now than they did by the laſt Advices. The Earl of *Peterborough* is ſo far from retiring to *Barcelona* for Security, as the *French Emiſſaries* have given out, that he is ſo Strong as to Act Offenſively, and to make further Acquiſitions. This being known in *Spain* will be yet a further Encouragement to a *Revolt*.

The Progreſs of our Shipping towards the *Mediteranean* will be alſo an Encouragement to a *Revolt* in *Spain*. If Admiral *Leake* be not ſtrong enough to engage the Count *de Tholouſe*, he'll ſoon be joyn'd by Commodore *Price*, who is already Arrived at *Lisbon*, Admiral *Eing* is Sail'd, and tho' he has met with bad Weather and contrary Winds, we find he keeps the Sea. Let us Pray Heartily, *Country-man*, for a fair Wind, and then, in a few Week's, we ſhall have a Fleet at *Gibraltar*, that will ſend *Tholouſe* Packing Home, and put the Duke *D' Anjou* upon other Meaſures than the Seige of *Barcelona*. Don't fear, *Country-man*, things look well at that Side.

Country-m. Maſter, if it were not too late I would ſpeak a Word about the *Rehearſal*.

Obſ. He's grown ſo *Dull*, *Fooliſh*, and *Inſipid* that he is not worth minding; nor would I ever meddle with him but on the Account of his *Calumnies* and *Forgeries*. However, I ſhall gratifie you at any time when we have no better Buſineſs on our Hands; for 'tis better to pick Straws than do nothing at all.

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